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Fourth session
New York, 2 March-3 April 1992
Agenda item 2 (c) of Plenary
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# PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS: CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES

## ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF TOXIC CHEMICALS

(Section II, Chapter 11 of Agenda 21)

## Recommendations of the Meeting of experts to discuss draft proposals for an intergovernmental mechanism for chemical risk assessment and management

(London, 16-19 December 1991)

### A. Introduction

1. In decision 16/35 adopted at its sixteenth session, the UNEP Governing Council took note of decision 2/17 of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in which the Preparatory Committee invited "the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), within the framework of the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS), in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other relevant organizations, to report on ongoing work carried out through appropriate governmental expert meetings concerning possible proposals for an intergovernmental mechanism for risk assessment and management of chemicals".

2. The Governing Council also requested the Executive Director to prepare, in cooperation with the secretariat of the Conference, WHO, ILO, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Economic Community (EEC) and other relevant organizations, draft proposals for an intergovernmental mechanism for risk assessment and management of chemicals.

3. It further requested the Executive Director to convene, in consultation with the Directors General of the ILO and WHO, within the context of the collaboration under the IPCS and in cooperation with the OECD, EEC, and the Secretary-General of the Conference and other relevant international organizations, a meeting of government-designated experts to consider the draft proposals and, in consultation with the Executive Heads of ILO and WHO and through the appropriate channels, to submit a report on the outcome of the meeting to the Preparatory Committee at its fourth session.

4. The Meeting took place in London, from 16 to 19 December 1991, at the invitation of the United Kingdom Department of Health. It was attended by 95 government-designated experts from 71 countries among which 43 were developing countries, as well as by representatives of 13 international intergovernmental and 11 non-governmental organizations.

## B. Recommendations

Proposals for an intergovernmental mechanism for chemical risk assessment and management 1/ to be submitted to the Preparatory Committee

5. The Meeting took note of:

(a) General Assembly resolution 44/228 on the convening of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the affirmation that the environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals is among the areas of major concern in maintaining the quality of the Earth's environment and especially in achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development in all countries, and should be addressed by the Preparatory Committee;

(b) UNEP Governing Council decision 16/35, which took note of decision 2/17 of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development inviting WHO, UNEP and ILO, within the framework of the International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS), in cooperation with FAO and other relevant organizations, to report on ongoing work carried out through appropriate governmental expert meetings concerning possible proposals for an intergovernmental mechanism for risk assessment and management of chemicals and, inter alia, requested the Executive Director to prepare draft proposals for an intergovernmental mechanism for risk assessment and management of chemicals (UNEP/IPCS/IMCRAM/exp/3/Rev.1) and to convene a meeting of government-designated experts to consider those proposals.

6. The Meeting agreed that the environmentally sound management of chemicals is vital to sustainable development. The Meeting noted and endorsed the five

priority areas proposed by the Preparatory Committee as components of an international strategy, namely:

(a) Expanding and accelerating the international assessment of chemical risks;

(b) Harmonization of classification and labelling of chemicals;

(c) Information exchange on toxic chemicals and chemical risks;

(d) Establishment of risk reduction programmes;

(e) Strengthening the national capabilities and capacities for management of chemicals.

7. The Meeting also noted that these priority areas were not exhaustive in respect of the areas for an international strategy required to bring about an improved system for environmentally sound management of chemicals.

8. In considering options to implement such a strategy, the Meeting agreed with the views expressed at sessions of the Preparatory Committee that:

(a) Increased collaboration and cooperation among programmes should be encouraged with gaps closed and duplication avoided;

(b) Best use of the capabilities of existing institutions should be encouraged, and the creation of new agencies avoided.

9. To implement the concept of an intergovernmental mechanism, the Meeting strongly endorsed the need for an enhanced role for the IPCS, increased coordination among United Nations organizations and an intergovernmental forum on chemical risk assessment and management to promote environmentally sound management of chemicals. The purpose of the forum is to provide policy guidance, develop strategies in a coordinated and integrated manner, provide the required political support and foster understanding of the issues by Governments. The Meeting took the view that the work of the forum would be facilitated if national Governments were to examine their own systems and nominate focal points.

Objectives

10. The objectives of the forum would be to:

(a) Develop and recommend concerted international strategies for chemical risk assessment and management in all countries, particularly taking into account the special needs of developing countries;

(b) Identify priorities for work, and assist in securing the collaboration, through Governments, of national and regional institutions to work with the international programmes;

(c) Strengthen national capabilities and capacities for chemicals management, especially in relation to training, education and provision of information;

(d) Periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing activities to implement the international strategy and make recommendations concerning them;

(e) Assist Governments to carry out work on chemical safety, promote the coordination of such activities among Governments and non-governmental organizations, and encourage the appropriate distribution of work among organizations within and outside the United Nations system in as simple, clear and logical a way as possible;

(f) Provide a forum to contribute to the development of principles for protection of health and the environment from chemicals.

Enhanced role for the IPCS

11. The Meeting regards it as essential that the role of the IPCS be expanded and upgraded to bring about successful implementation of the strategies for chemical risk assessment and management required to achieve the goals of Agenda 21. In particular, the Meeting believes that the mandate of the IPCS should be extended to include explicitly the coordination of risk assessment and risk management activities of international organizations in the United Nations system and the role of IPCS in support of the intergovernmental forum. Recognizing the importance of the OECD Chemicals Programme, the IPCS should be empowered to strengthen agreements with that programme so as to allow full use of the work of OECD by the wider international community. The Meeting noted the range of organizations in the United Nations system with roles relevant to chemical risk assessment and management which also may need to be strengthened. It strongly recommends that the UNCED Preparatory Committee should invite FAO and other relevant United Nations bodies including those engaged in the transport sector, as well as OECD, to cooperate in the IPCS.

12. In implementing the expanded role of the IPCS, the Executive Heads of the participating organizations should be advised by an intergovernmental committee drawn from the proposed intergovernmental forum. At the same time, it is of paramount importance that the scientific integrity of the current activities of the IPCS be maintained. The active participation of national scientific bodies should be continued and expanded and scientific advisory meetings be convened on a periodic basis to ensure this.

Activities

13. Activities to be undertaken as part of the international strategy could include, but not be limited to:

(a) The setting of priorities for an expanded programme of risk assessment of chemicals;

(b) In collaboration with industry and other interested parties, discussion of the principles to be adopted in international codes of conduct for the management of, and trade in, chemicals;

(c) Promotion of information exchange, scientific and technical cooperation and technology transfer, including human resource training and education, in order to strengthen national and regional capabilities to manage chemicals in an environmentally sound manner;

(d) Promotion of international agreements on harmonized classification and labelling of chemicals, with particular emphasis on the development of standardized hazard communication and symbols to be used in the labelling of chemicals;

(e) Providing advice to member States on:

(i) The methodology and application of chemical risk evaluations and other scientific information in national programmes to manage risks from chemicals;

(ii) Risk reduction measures;

(iii) Information systems on chemicals;

(iv) Preparedness for, and response to, chemical emergencies;

(v) The issues, including the regulatory framework, involved in the import and export of banned or severely restricted chemicals and inappropriate technology;

(vi) Prevention and treatment of poisoning;

(f) Identification of gaps in scientific knowledge essential for meaningful risk assessment and management;

(g) Promotion and follow-up of international and regional agreements and other arrangements respecting the import and export, production, distribution, storage, use, and disposal of chemicals (both man-made and of natural origin) so that these activities are not detrimental to human health and the environment;

(h) Promotion of risk communication to improve the public's understanding of the risks and benefits arising from the use of chemicals and how chemicals can safely be used.

Structure

14. The intergovernmental mechanism should consist of:

(a) A forum of States Members of the United Nations with the participation of:

(i) Relevant United Nations organizations;

(ii) The Chemicals Programme of the OECD;

(iii) Organizations representing regional geographic, political or economic groupings of countries, as appropriate;

(iv) Appropriate non-governmental organizations concerned with workers' interests, the environment, consumers and industry;

(b) A committee comprising the chair of the forum and members elected by the forum to provide guidance to the collaborating organizations in the IPCS and to carry out the business of the forum between meetings;

(c) The cooperating organizations in the expanded IPCS.

15. Representatives of member States of the forum and committee should be high-level representatives familiar with the range of chemical issues at a policy level within Governments. It is expected that the forum would meet at intervals of approximately three to five years and consideration should be given to it reporting to the General Assembly.

Implementation

16. If these proposals are approved at the Conference, it is suggested that the Executive Heads of WHO, ILO, and UNEP convene a conference of interested Governments within one year, which would constitute the first meeting of the forum and would discuss the terms of reference, the reporting and operating procedures, funding needs and sources and participation by organizations. Meanwhile, the IPCS should be given: (a) the responsibility and resources for providing an interim secretariat for the appropriate follow-up actions agreed at the Conference; and (b) the appropriate status within the United Nations system, in particular within WHO, in order to implement its role with the necessary authority.

## Notes

1/ In discussing chemical risk assessment and management, the Meeting bore in mind that these terms should be taken as covering the full range of activities relevant to ensuring the safe use of chemicals and that the term "toxic" referred both to acute and chronic harmful effects of chemicals.

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# ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF HAZARDOUS WASTES

(Section II, Chapter 12 of Agenda 21)

## Recommendations on international strategy and action programme including technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes of the Ad Hoc Meeting of Government-designated Experts convened by UNEP, held at Nairobi from 9 to 11 December 1991

1. In its decision 16/30, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme requested the Executive Director to prepare, through the Interim Secretariat for the Basel Convention and in cooperation with the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Economic Community and other relevant organizations, draft elements of an international strategy and an action programme, including technical guidelines, for environmentally sound management of hazardous waste and to convene an Ad Hoc Meeting of Government-designated Experts to consider the draft elements and a possible international strategy and action programme.

2. In the same decision, the Executive Director was also requested to submit a report on the outcome of the meeting of Government-designated Experts to the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal at its first meeting and to the Contracting Parties to the Bamako Convention at their first meeting as well as to report on progress made to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at its third session and, at its fourth session, on the outcome of the Meeting of Government-designated Experts.

3. The meeting noted inter alia that:

(a) A comprehensive framework or an international strategy for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes is required. A number of steps have been taken by the nations of the world in this regard with the aim of reducing transboundary movements of hazardous wastes to a minimum. Some of these are the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (1989); the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes within Africa (1991); the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Dumping Convention, 1972) and the Fourth ACP-EEC Convention (Lomé IV Convention, 1989);

(b) These conventions, though comprehensive, are however never in isolation. The aim of the international strategy is to have an all-pervasive type of strategy for hazardous waste management;

(c) Adequate monitoring and control of hazardous wastes is necessary in order to minimize possibilities for harm to living creatures and the environment. Monitoring of hazardous wastes implies that the whereabouts of such wastes are always tracked at all times, viz "from generation to disposal" and that the wastes do, in fact, arrive at an appropriate facility for treatment, storage or disposal.

Objectives of the strategy

4. The overall objective of the international strategy and action plan for the environmentally sound management of hazardous waste is as follows:

> "Within the framework of integrated life-cycle management, prevent to the extent possible and minimize the generation of hazardous waste, treat and dispose of the wastes in such a way that they do not cause harm to health and the environment, and eliminate or reduce transboundary movements of hazardous wastes."

5. The objectives aim at:

(a) Creation of an awareness at policy levels, providing a wide variety of options, and to serve as a reference guide when developing and implementing an action plan on hazardous waste management;

(b) Preventing and minimizing the generation of wastes in terms of quantity and toxicity in both industrial processes and products;

(c) Working out economically viable and sociably acceptable institutional, legal and educational strategies that can be applicable at the national level;

(d) Taking action to make education and exchange of information the cornerstones of any global hazardous waste strategy;

(e) Combining of individual responsibility, corporate behaviour and the adoption of sound waste-management policies by sovereign States with a view to addressing the problem of hazardous wastes management at the global level;

(f) Organizing major international efforts, including control of transboundary movement of hazardous wastes, with a view to laying the foundation for global management of hazardous wastes in an environmentally sound manner.

Principles

6. The following principles represent a selection of those most commonly applied in the management of hazardous wastes. None of them are comprehensive in the sense that they can be used to cover all aspects of environmental management. A single instrument cannot alone deal with the complex nature of environmental management. The formulation of a strategy requires careful selection from these principles, as well as new ones, to construct an integrated and comprehensive policy. Application of these principles will vary from country to country in view of their social, political and economic structure. The principles are as follows:

(a) Polluter-pays Principle: The potential polluter pays for the avoidance of pollution and the polluter pays for the clean-up cost of any pollution that has been caused.

(b) Integrated Life-cycle Principle: The management or design of substances and products should be conducted so as to attain the longest life, and cause minimum environmental impact during their production, use and disposal.

(c) The Precautionary Principle: Environmental protection should be undertaken whereby preventive measures are taken when there is reason to believe that substances, waste or energy introduced into the environment are likely to cause harm even where there is no conclusive evidence to prove a causal relation between inputs and their effects.

(d) The Source Reduction Principle: The generation of hazardous wastes must be reduced to a minimum at the source, in terms of quantity as well as hazardous potential.

(e) The Proximity Principle: Where the generation of hazardous wastes is unavoidable they must be disposed of in adequate facilities as close as possible to their source.

(f) The Self-sufficiency Principle: Countries should aim at final disposal of the wastes they produce as far as is compatible with environmentally sound and efficient management, within their own territories.

(g) The Integrated Pollution Control Principle: Management of hazardous wastes should form part of an environmental strategy for integrated pollution control for all forms of pollution, bearing in mind cross-media and multi-media effects.

(h) Least Transboundary Movement Principle: Transboundary movements of hazardous wastes should be reduced to a minimum, consistent with efficient and environmentally sound management.

(i) The Standardization Principle: Prescribed standards for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes should be followed, whatever the place of disposal.

(j) Principle of Sovereignty of National Laws: Every country should have the right to ban the importation of hazardous wastes into its territory in accordance with its national laws.

Strategic guidelines

7. Based on the principles enumerated above, the following strategic guidelines are proposed for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes:

(a) First Strategic Guideline: Promote waste prevention and minimization through implementation of cleaner production methods, avoiding the use of hazardous substances where substitutes are available. Where waste is generated, encourage environmentally sound methods of resource recovery, recycling, reclamation, direct re-use or alternative uses of waste.

(b) Second Strategic Guideline: Enhance knowledge and information about the socio-economic aspects of prevention and management of hazardous wastes, by comparing impacts of preventing hazardous wastes generation with managing such wastes.

(c) Third Strategic Guideline: To address the problems associated with contamination of the environment of hazardous wastes, increase knowledge about environmental health impacts and management of hazardous wastes by gathering information concerning environmental contamination and any associated risks posed to man.

(d) Fourth Strategic Guideline: Promote and strengthen institutional non-technical measures and educational and training capacities in hazardous waste management, by developing appropriate institutional frameworks having the authority and capabilities to perform the required tasks.

(e) Fifth Strategic Guideline: Promote and strengthen the effectiveness of international cooperation in management of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes, including control and monitoring, consistent with international legal instruments.

Strategic elements of hazardous waste management

8. This section builds on the strategic guidelines and identifies the elements of the strategic plan. The elements are subject to the following general recommendations for hazardous waste management:

(a) International organizations should promote cooperation among countries particularly with a view to helping developing countries to build up an adequate organizational base and infrastructure to manage the hazardous wastes they produce in an environmentally sound way.

(b) Hazardous waste managers should have the appropriate equipment, as well as the technical and environmental expertise, to process the materials they receive. This requirement forms a foundation for environmentally sound management of these wastes.

(c) There must be a government environmental infrastructure with the authority and capability to regulate, monitor and control activity involving hazardous wastes. This includes inter alia ability to enforce the regulations or penalize the industry or generator at fault.

(d) Those involved with hazardous wastes activities must register with their competent authorities and maintain a status of compliance with their national environmental laws.

(e) Under the oversight of the competent authority, and in accordance with its laws, a person involved with hazardous waste management must comply with national requirements for storage, transport, process waste-water releases, and process air emissions to the minimum consistent with environmentally sound management.

(f) Generators of hazardous wastes should be responsible for any damages caused by these wastes during those parts of the life cycle for which the generator has physical custody and/or legal control.

9. The strategy refers to a number of strategic elements which are elaborated in the report of the Ad Hoc Meeting of Government-Designated Experts to Consider the Draft Elements of and Possible International Strategy and Action Programme for the Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Waste (UNEP/CHW/WG.2/1/3).

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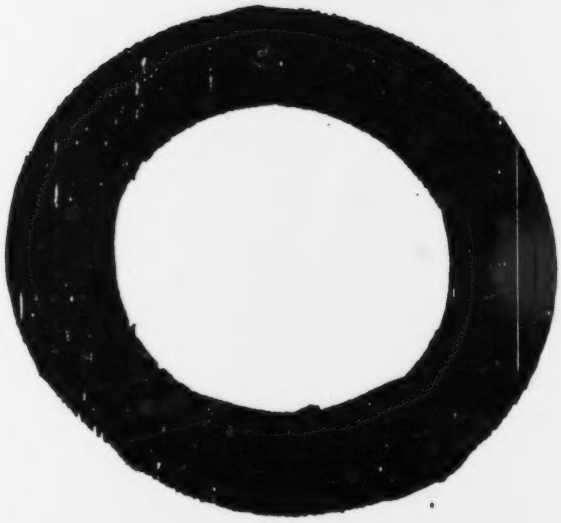
Letter dated 6 March 1992 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

As you are aware, the Ministers of Environment and Development Cooperation of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) met in Paris on 2 and 3 December 1991 and adopted some important conclusions regarding policy.

Inasmuch as the final document of the Paris meeting (see annex*) has a direct bearing on the work of the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, I feel that it would be helpful and appropriate if you were to communicate the text to the participating delegations.

(Signed) Jean-Bernard MERIMEE

* The annex is circulated in the languages of submission only.



ANNEX

Policy statement of the Meeting of OECD Ministers on environment and development, held in Paris on 2 and 3 December 1991

## Policy Statement

1. OECD Ministers of Environment and Development Co-operation, Heads of agencies, and a Commissioner of the European Community* met at the OECD in Paris, 2-3 December, to consider a co-operative new approach to achieving sustainable development on the national, regional and global levels. They were joined during the morning session of the first day by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and Heads of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme as well as a Vice-President of the World Bank. The meeting was chaired by Ms Edwige Avice, Minister of Co-operation and Development and Mr. Brice Lalonde, Minister of Environment, France. Vice-Chairmen were Mme. Pauline Browes, Minister of State for Environment, Canada; Mr. Toimi Kankaanniemi, Minister of Development Co-operation, and Ms. Sirpa Pietikainen, Minister of Environment, Finland; and Mr. Carlos Alberto Diogo Soares Borrego, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, and Mr. Jose Manuel Durão Barroso, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, Portugal. Ministers came to the following conclusions:

### Sustainable Development as a Shared and Common Objective

2. The meeting was convened in recognition of the fact that contributing to sustainable development world-wide is one of the OECD's central objectives. Over the past two decades, OECD Members and other countries have made major investments in the concurrent pursuit of economic growth, higher living standards and a healthy environment. Yet, the quality of the human condition in large parts of the world and hopes for a better future continue to be diminished by the interactions of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, unemployment, increased population pressures, uncontrolled urbanisation, pollution of the air, freshwater, seas and oceans, wasteful use of energy and natural resources, and degradation of arable land. This vicious circle must be broken through sound national economic and social policies, supported by international development co-operation. Furthermore, the growing recognition of regional and global scale environmental problems, such as ozone layer depletion and climate change, deforestation and desertification, loss of biological diversity, degradation of water resources and acid rain, calls for collective action by all nations to protect the basic life support systems of the Earth.

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* All subsequent references to "Ministers" also include Heads of Agencies and Commissioner of the European Community. All subsequent references to OECD Member countries, OECD governments, etc., include the European Community.

**An Interdependent World Economy**

3. During recent years an interdependent world economy has emerged, based increasingly on democratic political regimes and on free and open markets. This trend provides new hope and opportunities for the successful pursuit of sustainable development objectives in the 1990s and beyond. It is clear, however, that while the market economy has shown the necessary power and dynamism to promote efficiency and flexibility, market forces, if left to themselves, would not necessarily address the urgent need to combat widespread poverty and environmental problems. Government action is also needed.

**A Strengthened Partnership**

4. Ministers of the OECD countries, recognising the interdependence of all nations, therefore commit their Governments to use the unique opportunity of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 as a catalyst to build a strengthened partnership for sustainable development with non-Member countries, particularly in the developing world. This partnership should be based on mutual commitments by all countries in the light of their relative capacities and responsibilities.

**Responsibilities of OECD Countries**

5. Ministers acknowledge the responsibility that OECD countries bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command. In this regard, Ministers encourage the use of national environmental strategies to set priorities, to review policies and to monitor progress towards sustainable development. They emphasize that management of the environment requires the efficient and cost-effective integration and coherence of economic, social and environmental policies in all aspects of national and international policy-making, such as in industry, energy, transport, forestry and agriculture.

6. Ministers fully recognise in particular that OECD countries must demonstrate international leadership and continued commitment to achieve more efficient use of energy and raw materials and to work towards the elimination of human and environmental exposures to highly toxic and persistent chemicals as well as a reduction in the release of waste products into the environment. In this context, Ministers commit themselves to substantial action on the enhancement and protection of greenhouse gas sinks and limitation of emissions of greenhouse gases aiming in particular, as a first step at a stabilisation, individually or collectively, of $CO_2$ emissions and a phasing-out as soon as possible of CFCs controlled by the Montreal Protocol. Ministers further take note that most OECD countries have committed themselves to stabilise $CO_2$ emissions, individually or collectively, in general by the year 2000 at 1990 levels, taking into account the differences in their starting points and approaches, and that those countries make a strong appeal to

other OECD countries to do the same. Ministers agree to consider further steps towards an early phase-out of substances controlled by the Montreal Protocol at the forthcoming meeting of the Contracting Parties to that Protocol in Copenhagen. Ministers request the OECD to initiate work on mechanisms to facilitate joint implementation, in a cost-effective manner, of commitments on greenhouse gases.

7. Achieving sustainable development will require a re-evaluation of patterns of both consumption and production. It will also require the development of policies necessary for the promotion of sustainable development. This will include the increased use of economic instruments and the setting of technical standards, for instance for energy efficiency and recycling. It will also require the systematic use of environmental impact assessments and public participation in decision-making. Furthermore, continued technological innovation and diffusion will be needed. Ministers in this context emphasize the major role of economic instruments in stimulating policy integration in a cost-saving manner.

8. Progress and performance of individual OECD countries in meeting domestic environmental policy objectives and international commitments will be monitored in part through the peer review processes of environmental policies within the OECD launched by Environmental Ministers in January 1991 as well as in the ongoing peer review process of the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the Development Assistance Committee.

**Responsibilities of Non-OECD-countries**

9. Non-OECD countries are urged to join OECD countries in their commitment to sustainable development. This would include good governance, the effective integration of economic, social and environmental policies, and participatory approaches which involve accountability and broad-based involvement in the formulation and implementation of government policies. This would also involve making full use of the potential of market-based economic policies as well as an efficient private sector for the increased mobilisation of domestic resources. While acknowledging the complex relationship among the environmentally damaging use of natural resources, population growth and development, they note the growing global consensus on the need to slow population growth in those many countries where it is too high to permit sustainable development. Ministers strongly support the action taken by many countries aimed at mastering population growth. Recognising that only with economic and social development will more sustainable growth rates be attained, they stand ready to support measures to improve women's economic and social conditions in developing countries and to help establish, fund and implement effective population strategies and programmes.

**Partners in Cooperation: Resources**

10. For developing countries to achieve sustainable development and be in a position to address pressing problems of economic growth needed to combat poverty and to improve environmental management domestically, they must have access to the financial resources necessary to meet these challenges. While domestic resources will have to provide a major part, Ministers pledge their support to ensure that external resources available from both the public and private sectors and provided through existing bilateral and multilateral channels should be increased and used effectively and efficiently. In this context, Ministers recognise the importance of equitable burden sharing.

11. For developing countries to play their full part in coping with global environment problems, Ministers consider that appropriate additional financial resources must be made available to them as part of a strengthened partnership. In this respect, Ministers welcome the use of innovative financial mechanisms, such as debt-for-environment swaps. The commitment of OECD countries to finding the means to support world-wide co-operation in protecting the environment is manifested by the recent creation of a special fund under the Montreal Protocol and the establishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Ministers underline that a modified GEF under appropriate governance should play a leading role as the multilateral mechanism to provide additional financial resources to developing countries in the resolution of environmental problems of global significance. In this regard, most OECD countries will provide new financial resources.

**Technology**

12. Technological innovation and diffusion will be critical determinants of the pace and character of future economic growth and environmental management. All countries should create propitious conditions to encourage the private sector to innovate, market and use the technologies that contribute to sustainable development. Ministers note the important contribution that the private sector can make toward technology innovation, co-operation, the transfer of "clean" technology and environmental management information. Ministers thus commit their governments to expand technology co-operation with non-Member countries, to provide technology assistance and to address barriers to technology transfer, with a view to improving their access to environmentally-sound technologies, to facilitate the transfer of such technologies to developing countries and to enhance their scientific, technological and administrative capacities to use and develop technologies, by:

-- assisting the development of appropriate incentive structures, policies, legislation and institutions;

-- providing information on technology availability and options;

-- using technical assistance programmes and facilities to assist in building institutional capacities, providing experts, management know-how and training, supporting local research and development efforts, facilitating the acquisition of patents and licences in particular, within the framework of development co-operation, while taking full account of the need to protect intellectual property rights, and stimulating investments and the transfer of technology more generally;

-- addressing barriers to technology transfer and adopting appropriate general measures to reduce such barriers in order to create incentives for the transfer of appropriate technology by the private sector.

13. Ministers recognise that strengthened scientific, technological and administrative capacities in developing countries are essential for promoting sustainable development. Environment and Development Co-operation Ministers in OECD countries have therefore agreed to promote and further strengthen co-operation with developing countries in the area of capacity building. Technical and information exchanges, twinning arrangements as well as co-operation between government agencies, universities, research and scientific institutions are amongst the mechanisms which should be further strengthened and extended. Ministers also note with interest the development of an IEA/OECD initiative to establish an energy technology information system to promote the use of energy technologies for the control and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Ministers recommend that IEA and OECD discuss their initiative with developing countries at an early stage.

14. In addition, Ministers request the Development Assistance and the Environment Committees to formulate a programme of work to enhance the environmental capacity building efforts of Member countries. Such a programme should include a review of policies and activities of OECD countries in the field of technological co-operation relating to the environment; an inventory of capacity-building programmes; linkages to national and regional centres for sustainable development; and mechanisms for disseminating the special expertise of OECD. This programme is intended to contribute to the effective implementation of the results of UNCED.

15. In general, Ministers will ensure that their respective Ministries and Agencies further intensify their own co-operation, and that with other Ministries, with a view to promoting collaborative action for sustainable development. They welcome in this connection the support being provided through the work programme of the OECD to the UNCED process, believing that this sharing of more than two decades of accumulated experience in promoting economic growth and a sound environment in the 24 Member countries can make important contributions to achieving sustainable development everywhere. In particular, they agree that the OECD and its Member countries should:

-- promote the application of the Guidelines and Recommendations on environment and aid adopted by the OECD Development Assistance Committee and endorsed by Ministers;

-- make widely available the results of work on management of chemicals and wastes, biotechnology, energy, transport, cleaner technologies, and on the economics of sustainable development;

-- intensify work on other issues related to sustainable development, such as the economics of natural resource use and on the relations between trade and environment;

-- facilitate the exchange of experience in the appraisal of development policies and programmes and in the design and implementation of environmental management tools, including economic instruments, regulations and environmental indicators.

16. Ministers recognise the need to ensure that nuclear power generation takes place under the highest available standards of safety. Accordingly, they urge the competent international bodies, including the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency and the International Atomic Energy Agency, to provide their services, particularly to OECD non-Member countries of central and eastern Europe and to the Soviet Union and the Republics. Such assistance would be part of the efforts being undertaken by international organisations, the European Community and national governments to address the problems associated with nuclear installations in these countries.

17. Ministers regard the OECD as a major forum for discussing linkages between environmental and other policies, in particular environment and development assistance.

**Trade**

18. Improvements in the international trade system are also a vital contribution to sustainable development. Given the significance of increased international trade for sustainable development, Ministers stress the importance they attach to the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round. All countries have a common interest in ensuring that trade and environmental policies are mutually supportive. Achieving sustainable development will require complementary actions to address trade and environment conflicts which may arise. There are still considerable divergences in views of how to increase the compatibility of trade and environmental policies at the national, regional and global levels. Ministers support the efforts by the OECD to analyse trade and environment linkages and recommend the drawing up of OECD guiding principles on trade and environment, and welcome the reconvening of the working group on trade and environment of the GATT.

**The Role of the Private Sector**

19. Ministers underline the important role of the private sector as provider of managerial, technical and financial resources in support of sustainable development. The private sector is a driving force for economic growth in market-oriented economies, concurrently it creates resources needed to protect the environment. Ministers endorse the work being done by the Business Council for Sustainable Development in promoting co-operative efforts with firms in developing countries. Ministers welcome the inclusion in 1991 of an environmental chapter in the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises as well as the Business Charter for Sustainable Development adopted by the International Chamber of Commerce. They encourage corporations in OECD countries to subscribe fully to these principles and guidelines for good environmental practice and behaviour.

**Non-Governmental Organisations and People's Participation**

20. Ministers welcome the increasing involvement of non-governmental organisations both in developed and developing countries in sustainable development at all levels, especially by action at the grassroots level.

21. Sustainable development can only be achieved through the active involvement of all segments in society, including indigenous peopl and local communities. Ministers therefore underline the need for a greater devolution of decision-making to the local level and the empowerment of all to participate in development within the framework of democratic systems of government. In this connection they also stress the importance of mobilising public support for policies conducive to sustainable development.

22. Particular attention should be given to the different roles assumed by men and women in environmentally-related activities in developing countries. More efforts are required to involve women from the preparation stage in forestry, agriculture and water management programmes because of their essential responsibilities, skills and knowledge in these sectors.

**UNCED 92**

23. This Ministerial meeting takes place at a crucial moment in the preparations for the UNCED. Ministers have carefully considered the status of the preparatory work and reiterate the strong support of their Governments for the Conference. They pledge their firm determination to make it a success and believe that the attendance of world leaders would make an important contribution to this. The Conference should formulate agreed strategies for sustainable development and start a process of strengthened partnerships to attack environmental problems at national,

regional and global levels. The Conference also offers the occasion for endorsing a consensus on principles and priorities for the 1990s and beyond, and for agreeing to Agenda 21 with commitments for concrete actions and means of implementation. Ministers reiterate their countries' support for the development of effective framework conventions on biological diversity and on climate change to be opened for signature during the 1992 UN Conference as well as for a statement of principles which should form the basis for negotiations on a Forest Convention. In conclusion, they see the Conference as a decisive stage in a new process of multilateral co-operation on environment and development.

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Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda*

# PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS: RECENT ACTIONS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND OTHER BODIES OF RELEVANCE TO THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

## SOIL CONSERVATION: LAND LOSS

## A challenge for the African countries engaged in drought and desertification control

## Report on the activities of the Sahel and Sahara Observatory**

1. Until now, the national, regional and international efforts undertaken in Africa to control desertification have not always had the desired effect, and improved international coordination in this area is becoming a priority.

2. It was in July 1989, at the Summit of the Arch, that the President of the French Republic therefore proposed the establishment of the Sahel and Sahara

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* See A/CONF.151/PC/96.

** This report has been prepared by the Sahel and Sahara Observatory in response to the request by the Preparatory Committee at its third session.

Observatory. The project won the political endorsement of the seven major industrialized countries, a commitment later renewed at the London Summit in July 1991.

3. The recommendations made at the symposium launching the project, held at Paris in July 1990, and the numerous consultations with partners from North and South made it possible to conceive of the Sahel and Sahara Observatory as a regional framework for consultation, coordination and partnership and to define its objectives.

4. The Sahel and Sahara Observatory is neither a fund nor an executing agency; it is a tool for liaison, for building on existing achievements and for strengthening solidarity so as to consolidate a genuine regional space. Its aim is to implement a programme of joint, concerted activities for all the countries of North, East and West Africa that border on the Sahara.

5. In addition to the marked interest shown by the African countries concerned and by their regional organizations, 1/ a process of consultation with the partners of the Sahel and Sahara Observatory (in the case of the North, the seven major industrialized countries) has been promoted by France and by the provisional structure since July 1990, resulting in participation by Canada, Germany, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the regional organizations of West and East Africa and the countries of North Africa.

6. The participation of these countries and organizations is motivated by the originality of the Sahel and Sahara Observatory as a transregional initiative aimed at meeting the same challenge, that of drought and desertification.

## I. OBJECTIVES OF THE SAHEL AND SAHARA OBSERVATORY

7. In order to perform this role of integrating liaison, follow-up, regular exchanges of information, harmonization, expertise and forging of closer links between the three subregions, the Sahel and Sahara Observatory has the following objectives:

(a) To promote cooperation and exchanges among the three subregions of the Sahel and Sahara Observatory in order to consolidate a genuine regional space;

(b) To develop and strengthen African research and development capacities;

(c) To arrive at an overall picture and a reliable analysis of desertification.

8. To that end, the Sahel and Sahara Observatory is seeking:

(a) To contribute to the exploitation, evaluation and consolidation of existing achievements;

(b) To support efforts to formulate national and regional priorities in response to needs and to promote comprehensive approaches; to contribute to the implementation of regional and national strategies for preventing and controlling environmental degradation;

(c) To promote the involvement of local populations in the formulation of natural resources management programmes;

(d) To promote the use of advanced technology and develop local skills, and to encourage their integration wherever necessary;

(e) To promote the harmonization of procedures for the collection, processing and interpretation of data from various sources;

(f) To support and encourage effective training activities at every level.

## II. ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SAHEL AND SAHARA OBSERVATORY

### A. Programme

9. In order to create favourable conditions for achieving its objectives, the Observatory has formulated a programme of activities.

10. The Observatory has based its approach on the work of the launching symposium, the results of the survey of 110 institutions of North and South conducted by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO)/Sahel and Sahara Observatory (OSS) and the consultations held with various partners.

11. This programme of activities is conceived as a comprehensive, integrated initiative, based on the following four major areas:

(a) Population, natural resources and development;

(b) Water resources;

(c) Soil, plant and animal resources;

(d) Observation, meteorology, climatology: ways and means for observing the environment and disseminating information.

## B. Launching of significant activities

12. As part of this programme of activities, the Sahel and Sahara Observatory has, since 1990, launched a number of significant operations.

13. In the early stages, these activities basically involve evaluating and developing current knowledge in order to avoid duplication and identify deficiencies and the real needs of the countries in question.

14. North/South working groups are engaged in carrying out these activities, which relate to the following topics:

(a) Women, environment, development: the aim is to define, by means of a subregional approach, a strategy for promoting women's participation in the use and rational management of natural resources;

(b) Integrated soil management: this initially involves the preparation, on the basis of experience and experiments, of summaries which will lead to information documents permitting an exchange of expertise on different soils;

(c) Establishment of a pastoral network in the Sahel and Sahara Observatory region;

(d) Support for a "camel" network in East Africa;

(e) Long-term environmental follow-up observatory: the objective is to identify, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), observatories concerned with monitoring environmental changes in the three subregions of the Sahel and Sahara Observatory. This activity also involves making an inventory of information acquisition methods and of the various physical, biological and socio-economic parameters surveyed and comparing research methods and methods for ensuring compatibility and harmonization of surveys. These activities are intended to better define the problems of desertification and environmental degradation so as to assist planners in taking decisions on national and regional development and natural resources management;

(f) Water resources. Initially this involves:

- Identifying institutions responsible for water resources and their evaluation and for water resources policies;
- Evaluating national systems for the observation of surface and groundwater resources;
- Evaluating and mapping the exploitable groundwater reserves of aquifers in the major basins of the Sahara and Sahel.

Missions to identify the institutions responsible for water resources and to evaluate national systems for water resources observation are being conducted in cooperation with the World Bank, existing regional institutions (including the Inter-State Committee on Water Studies (CIEH) and the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid and Non-Irrigated Lands (ACSAD)) and national institutions;

(g) Soil resources: this initially involves assessing current knowledge of soil resources and evaluating soil degradation and soil fertility. This activity is being conducted in cooperation with the International Pedological Reference and Information Centre (ISRIC) and regional institutions;

(h) Plant resources. The initial stage involves the identification of existing materials: vegetation maps, specialized studies, inventories, information system and methodologies used by national, regional and international bodies operating in the three subregions of the Sahel and Sahara Observatory;

(i) Observation, climatology, meteorology:

- Integrated information systems and geographical information system: this activity involves establishing a pilot group and expert groups responsible for developing methods and means of comparing and integrating information from various sources obtained on a wide range of scales, from ground observations on a scale of a few square metres to satellite observations made monthly at 100 square metres and daily at 1 square kilometre. It also involves ways of analysing and integrating data on villages, catchment areas, administrative regions, countries, subregions or the entire continent. The pilot group is being designed with, inter alia, the World Bank, UNSO and UNEP;

- Pilot projects to monitor the dynamic of desertification in the three subregions: an initial feasibility study was conducted in West Africa in 1991 under the auspices of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). A meeting of potential donors, organized jointly by CILSS and the Sahel and Sahara Observatory, will bring interested partners together through a regional project based on national components and will allow for the harmonization of various projects in the course of preparation or implementation which are being supported by France, the European Economic Community (EEC), the United States, the World Bank and UNSO;

  Two regional seminars will be held in North Africa (Algiers and Cairo) by the Sahel and Sahara Observatory and the North African Regional Remote Sensing Centre to formulate the terms of reference of a feasibility study for a subregional project, based on the same approach as in West Africa. The same approach is planned in East Africa with the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD) and UNSO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Nairobi Regional Remote Sensing and Cartography Centre;

- Climatic variability and forecasts: two regional seminars were held in 1991 - at Tamanrasset with the Sahel and Sahara Observatory and the Algerian meteorological service and at Nairobi with the Sahel and Sahara Observatory and the Kenyan meteorological service - to identify the bases for harmonizing the meteorological systems of the countries bordering the Sahara, enhancing meteorological outputs and identifying problems relating to telecommunications and training. The activities to be undertaken in the area of climate research and forecasting are being defined in cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) at Niamey in connection with the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP or "global change"), national meteorological services, regional centres such as the Regional Training Centre for Agrometeorology and Operational Hydrology and their Applications (AGHRYMET) and research institutes and universities of North and South.

## III. SHORT AND MEDIUM-TERM OUTLOOK FOR THE SAHEL AND SAHARA OBSERVATORY

15. The Sahel and Sahara Observatory is continuing its efforts to firmly establish its international role, which will enable it to consolidate its functioning and attain its objectives.

### A. Establishment of the organs of the Sahel and Sahara Observatory

16. At a meeting scheduled for early 1992, the various partners from North and South concerned with the Sahel and Sahara Observatory will, if they agree to it in principle, establish the following organs:

(a) A North-South international assembly responsible for approving the policy guidelines and programme of activities of the Sahel and Sahara Observatory;

(b) A permanent secretariat, responsible for promoting and implementing the programme of activities, which will replace the present provisional structure;

(c) An international scientific and technical advisory committee responsible for formulating scientific and technical proposals, opinions and recommendations concerning the programme.

B. Further activities by the Sahel and Sahara Observatory

17. As a liaison tool, the Sahel and Sahara Observatory will endeavour to consolidate the desired regional space and to pursue its mission of coordination, consultation and mobilization of its various partners. It will ensure the implementation of all activities envisaged by its programme in the field of desertification control.

Notes

1/ Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development, Arab Maghreb Union: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda.

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## Note by the Secretary-General of the Conference

1. In its decision 1 (VI) of 14 February 1992, the Committee on the Development and Utilization of New and Renewable Sources of Energy requested the Secretary-General to transmit to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at its fourth session the following documents: (a) the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Solar energy: a strategy in support of environment and development" (A/AC.218/1992/5/Rev.1), pursuant to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 45/208 of 21 December 1990; (b) the report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on New and Renewable Sources of Energy (A/AC.218/1992/9); (c) the report entitled "Hydropower - Utilization of waterfall energy in an environmentally sensitive world" (A/AC.218/1992/10); and (d) the pre-feasibility survey entitled "A proposed network of centres of excellence of international scope on new and renewable sources of energy", carried out by the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation of the Secretariat, the United Nations University and the Italian Agency for New Technology, Energy and Environment.

2. Those reports will be made available at the Documents Counter in the Committee room.

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* A/CONF.151/PC/96.

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